

rededicating yourselves to maintaining the freedoms we hold most dear, for ourselves and for the generations to come.

Best wishes for a wonderful holiday celebration.

WILLIAM J. CLINTON

## Remarks at a Memorial Service for J. William Fulbright *February 17, 1995*

Mrs. Fulbright, the children and grandchildren of Senator Fulbright, all of his family and friends here assembled, we come to celebrate and give thanks for the remarkable life of J. William Fulbright, a life that changed our country and our world forever and for the better. In the work he did, the words he spoke, and the life he lived, Bill Fulbright stood against the 20th century's most destructive forces and fought to advance its brightest hopes.

He was the heir of Jefferson in our time. He believed in the American idea, but he respected others who saw the world differently. He lived with passion tempered by reason. He loved politics, but cautioned against the arrogance of power. He cherished education as the answer to our common problems and our personal dreams. But he knew there would always be more to learn.

Time and again for 32 years as a Congressman, a Senator, chairman of the Foreign Relations Committee, he worked for progress and peace, often against great odds and sometimes at great personal cost: expanding opportunities for the people of his beloved Arkansas and other Americans who needed help to make the most of their lives; leading the way to found the United Nations; taking a long, lonely stand against Joseph McCarthy; expanding the reach of our culture as the driving force behind the Kennedy Center; fighting to change our course in Vietnam; reminding us that the forces of freedom would win the cold war if we could avoid nuclear war, what he called his generation's power of veto over the next; and of course, in a cold dawn only 2 weeks after Hiroshima, calling for the creation of the international exchange program that will live as his most profound legacy.

The Fulbright Scholarship Program is a perfect example of Bill Fulbright's faith, different kinds of people learning side by side, building what he called "a capacity for empathy, a distaste for killing other men, and an inclination

for peace." Next year will be the 50th anniversary of that program. Now it includes as its alumni Nobel Prize winners, Members of Congress, leaders for peace and freedom the world over, and many not so famous people who went home to live out the faith of Senator Fulbright. More than 120,000 from other countries have come here and more than 90,000 Americans have gone overseas to study, to learn, and to grow. No matter what their native tongue, all of them are now known by the same name, Fulbrights.

In a way, a lot of us here, especially those of us from Arkansas and those who worked for him in other ways over the years, are also in our own way Fulbrights. Those of us who knew and loved him, who worked for him, who learned from him, each of us have our indelible memories, some of them serious, some of them quite funny.

I must say that I was a little reluctant to accept the request that I speak today because I once attended a funeral with Bill Fulbright, and I know how much distaste he had for highly formalized rituals. If he were giving me instructions, he'd say, "Bill, say something nice, be brief, and try to get everybody out so they can enjoy this beautiful day."

But let me tell you that those of us who understood and shared his roots in the Ozarks, those of us who knew what his life was like as a young person growing up and playing football and becoming the president of a university, those of us who understood later in life what he learned when he had the chance first to travel overseas and study in England and see the insanity that resulted from the squandering of the victory in World War I, those of us who saw firsthand the enormous anguish he felt, as I would see him early in the morning and late in the evening in the Senate office building, in the great struggles over the Vietnam war, those of us who saw him in his campaign in

1968, when this country was being literally torn apart, still trying to learn, trying to understand, and trying to be understood, we will never forget the debt that we owe him and the debt the country owes him.

When Mrs. Fulbright spoke last year in Germany, in recognition of the Senator's receipt of a distinguished award from the American Chamber of Commerce there, she quoted from a letter Senator Fulbright received 30 years ago. I'd like to leave it with you, so that you can remember something of what he did and the times in which he did it.

She said, all this talk of leadership, freedom and education may seem simple, self-evident and commonplace to you now, but there was a time when it was considered radical, even dangerous. Thirty years ago, Senator Fulbright was called names I wouldn't dream of putting on paper, much less pronouncing to a respectable audience. He got emotional letters full of praise and hate. There was one which affected him far more deeply than all the rest. And after reading it, he closed his office doors, ordered all the calls held, and wrote in longhand an answer which he did not copy. I will read you the letter:

"Dear Senator Fulbright: I have never voted for you. I have never missed a chance to belittle you. But deep inside me, there was a nagging suspicion that I have been wrong. As this world plunges headlong toward what well may be its destruction, it gets increasingly harder to hear lonely voices, such as yours, calling for common sense, human reason, and the respect for the brotherhood of man. But be of good cheer, my

friend, keep nipping at their heels. This old world has always nailed its prophets to trees, so don't be surprised at those who come at you with hammers and spikes. Know that those multitudes yet unborn will stand on our shoulders. And one among them will stand a little higher because he is standing on yours."

We owe a lot to Bill Fulbright, some of us more than others. Let us all remember the life he lived and the example he set.

A few years ago, Senator Fulbright came home to Fayetteville, and we celebrated a Fulbright Day. I was then the Governor, and after the official event, we went back to his hotel room and watched the football game. And when the young player for one of the teams kicked a field goal, he looked at me and he said, "You know, I used to do that over 60 years ago. I don't know what happened to all those years. They sure passed in a hurry." I think we can all say that they also passed very well.

Senator Fulbright's lesson is captured on the statue in the Fayetteville town square in these quotes: "In the beauty of these gardens, we honor the beauty of his dream, peace among nations and free exchange of knowledge and ideas across the Earth." Bill Fulbright also left us the power of his example, always the teacher and always the student.

Thank you, friend, and Godspeed.

NOTE: The President spoke at 10:25 a.m. at the Washington National Cathedral. In his remarks, he referred to Harriet Fulbright, widow of the Senator.

## Remarks at a Salute to African-American Veterans

*February 17, 1995*

Ladies and gentlemen, Secretary Perry, Secretary Brown, General Shalikashvili, General Powell, General Davison, Admiral Gravely, Ossie Davis, Colonel Earley.

I hate to throw any cold water on this magnificent night, but I'm just sitting here thinking whether as Commander in Chief I should dismiss or simply demote whoever it was who arranged for me to speak after Colonel Earley. [Laughter] If ever there was an embodiment

of what we came here to celebrate tonight, if ever there was evidence that this celebration is occurring at least 50 years too late, it is Colonel Earley.

Tonight we celebrate the extraordinary history of patriotism of our Nation's African-American citizens, whose courage and devotion to country helped to raise the consciousness of a nation, and through years and decades and centuries to reverse a tragic legacy of discrimination. His-